



Wandering For God

with Pastor Stephen Rehrig, First Presbyterian Church of Hillsboro

The Punch Line

The young seminary student was preparing to preach his first sermon. Unsure how to begin, he went to see one of his professors to ask for advice. "I often start with a joke," the professor said. "It relaxes the congregation, gets their attention, and we are good to go from there." The student thanked him and began to leave, then turning back asked, "Can you share with me a good joke to use?"

"One I like is to get up and say: 'Some of the happiest times of my life were spent in the arms of another woman.' Then after a few seconds I conclude: 'My mother.'"

Sunday morning came. The young seminarian got up in the pulpit with a big smile and a look of confidence. "Some of the happiest times of my life have been spent in the arms of another woman," he proclaimed. The congregation looked shocked; his wife was stunned; then panic came over his face: "Oh my God, I've forgotten who she was."

The punch line is very important, not just in telling a joke but also in living life.

How we conclude things often determines the entire outcome—regardless of what was said or done at the beginning.

Tomorrow begins a new year. How you start it is important, but will soon be history. How you finish the year is the real issue. Are you going to start big with all sorts of resolutions and goals, and then fizzle out to nothing? Or are you going to grow, push and expand your whole life toward a big finish?

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